



OFFICE OF  
**INSPECTOR  
GENERAL**  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

# HIGHLIGHTS

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March 7, 2014

## Fiscal Year 2013 Statistical Test Reviews

Report Number FT-MA-14-007

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 requires the U.S. Postal Service to report its annual revenue and mail volume to the Postal Regulatory Commission. The Origin-Destination Information System-Revenue, Pieces, and Weight is the primary system for collecting revenue, volume, and weight data for most mail classes and extra services. The Postal Service uses system data to develop new postage rates, conduct studies, prepare its budget, and support decisions on mail operations.

As part of this process, data collection technicians conduct statistical mail tests to sample live mail and collect data to estimate stamp usage to calculate postage bought by the public but not used.

The Postal Service began a remediation plan in fiscal year (FY) 2013 to address a deficiency in data collection sampling procedures reported by management on September 30, 2012. As a result of the remediation plan, revision of data collection handbooks, and mandatory data collection training, the Postal Service reduced the severity of the deficiency as of September 30, 2013.

Our objective was to determine whether the Postal Service conducted statistical mail tests in accordance with established policies and procedures.

### **WHAT THE OIG FOUND:**

Data collection technicians did not always conduct system tests in accordance with set procedures. We identified 16 test errors in 10 of 45 tests we observed. Specifically, the technicians did not always:

- Follow and apply the appropriate test mail sampling methodology.
- Correctly enter and verify all data entered into their laptop computers.
- Properly identify, isolate, and capture test mail.

In addition, we identified four instances where data collection technicians did not protect their laptop computers. These errors occurred during the first 3 quarters of FY 2013. No errors were identified in the last quarter, when remediation efforts were completed. Based on our observations and management's efforts to mitigate the potential risk of test errors, we think the reduction in the severity of the deficiency is appropriate.

### **WHAT THE OIG RECOMMENDED:**

We recommended management continue training on sampling methodology policies and protecting data collection equipment and complete and issue revisions of all statistical programs handbooks.